> traversed by merchant traffic it was in the German sense productive. The passage of these convoys through the danger area showed that, if the system could be developed and extended, it would alter the whole aspect of submarine warfare. The German submarine commanders would no longer be able to go to a fruitful area and there lie in wait: henceforward they would be compelled to seek out and attack groups of ships of whose movements they knew nothing—a very much more difficult task, and one which in many cases would be quite impossible.[55*]

That verdict was fully confirmed by the statistics of convoys. Between the summer of 1917 and the end of the hostilities in November, 1918, some 16,657 vessels were convoyed to or from this country. The total losses, including 16 sunk by marine peril and 36 ships sunk when not in contact with the convoy, amounted to 154 vessels, or less than 1 per cent, of the vessels convoyed. Alike in number and in gross tonnage the total number and tonnage of the ships lost in convoy during nearly a year and a half of unrestricted warfare were considerably less than the losses incurred during the single month of April, 1917, before the first convoys were introduced.

Convoy statistics

Progress of each month.

Under Rear-Admiral Duff's leadership the convoy system, benefiting by experience, kept improving and vary-

convoy system: ing speeds were adjusted satisfactorily.

Extracts from Report Here are some extracts from a Report prescnted to me after the new regime had been in operation for some time :—

* "Naval Operations," Vol. V, p. 51.